

The Fall of the IQ/Discrepancy Model

- Macmann et al. (1989) examined students with LD and students not identified as LD. Using different discrepancy models they found classification agreement rates from .57 to .86.
- Clarizio and Bennett (1987) found that when various IQ and achievement tests are used the agreement rates drops to below .25. This indicates that only one out of four students identified as having a learning disability would be identified as LD again when different IQ and achievement tests were used.
- Ysseldyke et al. (1979) used several standardized tests in an attempt to differentiate between students identified as LD and students identified as low achieving. No practical statistically significant difference was found between the two groups. Additionally, they found that at least half of the sample received identical scores. Finally, they found that 40 of the 99 students were misclassified. There was no important psychometric differences between students with LD and low achieving students.
- Results similar to the above can be found over and over again in the research:
 - White and Wigle (1986)
 - Sinclair and Alexson (1986)
 - Warner et al. (1980)
 - Marston et al. (1983)
 - Kavale and Forness (2001) (index of discrepancy)
- Kavale and Forness (2001) contended that the discrepancy model is ignored in actual practice.
- Gottlieb et al. (1984) found that their sample of students with LD had an IQ score that was one and half standard deviations below the comparison group of students without LD. They contended that students were being identified as LD despite not having the discrepancy.
- Insensitive to the developmental stages of learning. If elementary age student evidences difficulties with reading and secondary student evidences difficulties with reading, the root of those difficulties is likely to be different. Thus, only about 2% of first graders with difficulties in phonological awareness and word identification will display necessary discrepancy to qualify. This causes about 25% of secondary students to be identified by the discrepancy model. This leads to under identification of younger students with whom interventions would be more successful. This is commonly referred to as the “Wait To Fail Model.” With discrepancy models the average age of identification for students with LD is 10. This results in students having to struggle and fail to master academic skills until they finally obtain an achievement score that is low enough to produce a discrepancy (Fletcher et al., 1998).